

# The new man at the helm: Admiral Stansfield Turner

by Barry Kliff

**WANTED:** Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

**Job Description:** Responsibility for gathering and analyzing United States intelligence. Supervise an estimated force of 150,000 employees with an estimated budget of over \$7 billion. Must report to eight congressional oversight committees and the president of the United States.

**Salary:** Negotiable.

**References:** Not required but may be submitted.

For the last five years, the Central Intelligence Agency could have easily ran an ad like this because they have had to look for a new director. In any other business, five new directors in any period of time would be enough to close the company's door. Yet, competition for the job isn't going to stop and the work must go on. It was inevitable, then, that whoever President Carter picked for the job would be a controversial choice.

Admiral Stansfield Turner did not disappoint the president. A former Annapolis graduate, Turner, 54, has credentials that are impressive to both conservatives and liberals. A Rhodes scholar, he studied at both Oxford and the War College in Washington before earning his four stars at age 51. A native of Highland Park, Ill., Turner has gained the reputation as an having unconventional military mind that prefers to discuss trends and not statistics.

"I've tried to make it pretty clear that if I can't tell someone something, I want them to know I can't tell them," Turner said in an interview with The Daily Illini. "We do and will continue to declassify secrets but it is a very time-consuming process and we don't have enough people to do the job adequately."

Turner, who was recently put in charge of overall U.S. intelligence, is certainly the most powerful CIA official since John Dulles and the start of the Cold War in the 1950s. An active Navy officer, Turner's critics charge that he would rather be chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff or chief of Naval Operations and using his post at the CIA as a stepping stone. He pointedly denies these charges.

I'm here to run the CIA and that's all I'm going to do. This is a big enough job for anyone and I don't think about what's going to happen in the future. We've got enough work now to keep this agency busy for a long time."

Turner is certainly keeping the agency's 20-30 lawyers busy. When a CIA agent gains employment they are required to sign an oath that forbids them from publishing or describing the names, locations or methods which the CIA uses in gathering or analyzing its intelligence. Several agents, most notably Philip Agee, Victor Marchetti and Frank Snepp have recently written books which detail CIA activities both here and abroad, thus, violating the oath. Snepp's book, *Decent Interval* is a critical account of America's last days in Vietnam in which he describes a series of sloppy plans and even sloppier execution by the American forces which forced U.S. troops to abandon several thousand Vietnamese that would have otherwise been saved.

"I talked to Snepp in this office and he told me he wouldn't publish this book," Turner said. "If he didn't like the way things were going, he should have gone through channels. He could have gone to the oversight boards, but instead he told me one thing and did another."

Turner said the courts should decide this matter, but added that it can set a dangerous precedent. "This is a very difficult business and if we go to court, then we have to prove that something is harmful. This is going to require us to produce additional classified documents which releases more information. It's a self-perpetuating monster."

Snepp denies these charges and claims that he tried to go through channels, but said that the committees wouldn't touch anything so controversial.

Aside from the Snepp matter, Turner said the CIA will certainly be a leaner but more efficient organization in the future. "We're going to be bringing in other people to check our work and I think that will help. We've got to avoid duplication."

As an example, Turner said the CIA recently sent a copy of its world energy report to major energy companies' chief executives. "Some of them told us we were all wet and then we invited them in to tell us why. Well, they came in and now we can see their side. I'm not saying that we're wrong, but they do give us an additional perspective that we need to see."

Turner also said that although clandestine activities will be curtailed, they will not be eliminated. "Unfortunately the other side isn't playing by the same rules we are. However, we don't allow assassinations anymore or things of that nature." What most people fail to realize is the nature of this business; this isn't an ice-cream factory, this is a spy shop."